

December 12th, 2018

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Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

RE: Docket 18-353, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau Seeks Comment On Wireless Internet Service Providers Association And Utilities Technology Council Request For Waiver Of Citizens Broadband Radio Service Transition Deadline

To Whom It May Concern:

Athermal LLC is a startup provider of white-label Interconnected VoIP services for Tier 3 Internet Services Providers in the United States. We were founded by two Fixed Wireless Internet Service Provider veterans to help smaller providers that cannot cost effectively offer Interconnected VoIP services provide those services to their customer base. By the end of March 2019, we expect to provide services to over fifty rural Internet Service Providers serving more than 150,000 rural Americans including many of the CAF II awardees. As of this date, we have already signed contracts pre-launch with rural providers in Arizona, Arkansas, California, Ohio, and Texas – all of whom use the existing Part 90 regulations to provide service to their customers.

Through our consultations with our current and prospective customers, along with our experience in the Fixed Wireless provider space since the mid-2000's, the Part 90 3650-3700MHz spectrum has become a critical asset for Fixed Wireless providers to provide broadband services where unlicensed spectrum is incapable of doing so and licensed spectrum is cost prohibitive. With much excitement we have followed the Part 96 CBRS proceedings as a valuable extension of capabilities for providers serving the underserved, those tackling the broadband gap in the most rural parts of our nation.

When the FCC adopted the initial Part 96 regulations in 2015 with a five-year transition period this appeared to give plenty of notice to equipment manufacturers, Spectrum Access System (SAS) database administrators, and licensees operating under Part 90 plenty of time to come into compliance with the new system. With that said, the current reality is that as of this date none of the SAS vendors have been FCC approved yet, few equipment options have been certified, and there as of yet not a Certified Processional Installer (CPI) certification or curriculum for licensees to train their staff.

We believe that with only fifteen months remaining for licenses granted or renewed after January 8th, 2013 that an undue, unnecessary, and unintentional burden is being placed on Part 90 licensees that provide broadband services to rural Americans along with Interconnected VoIP telephony – which is a vital lifeline in many parts of this country that do not have reliable POTS or Cellular service. Training of certified installers, swapping of equipment that is not SAS or Part 96 compliant, and implementation of the SAS will leave licensees potentially in a situation to turn off services on April 17th, 2020 that need them the most.

Therefore, Athermal LLC fully supports the joint Wireless Internet Service Provider Association (WISPA) and Utilities Technology Council (UTC) filing to extend all Part 90 licenses to January 8th, 2023 under consideration in the matter of FCC Docket 18-353. We believe that this valuable extension gives all parties the time necessary to fully implement Part 96 regulations while protecting the consumers that are fed by these valuable systems. As the SAS and operators using GAA spectrum under Part 96 will have to operate in conjunction with these grandfathered stations already, moving the grandfathered date to protect those consumers receiving service today we believe causes no undue harm to new licensees in Part 96 while preventing significant harm to Part 90 operators who will be under significant human and capital constraints to meet the deadline.

Respectfully Submitted,

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